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Editorial

Editorial: *Development and psychopathology*, continuity, and change

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The field of developmental psychopathology is unique and special. Dr Tom Achenbach is credited with the first use of the term in his (1974) book by that name. However, it became clear that developmental psychopathology truly occupied a distinct scholarly space at the intersection of several other academic disciplines upon the publication of a landmark special issue of *Child Development* edited by Dr Dante Cicchetti in 1984 (Cichetti, 1984; Sroufe & Rutter, 1984) and his subsequent founding of this journal in 1989 (Cichetti, 1989). In short, developmental psychopathology is not clinical psychological science, nor child clinical psychology, nor normative child or adolescent development. Rather, developmental psychopathology truly seeks to represent these intersections and values all scholarly inquiries along the continuum from "typical" to "atypical."

The discipline of developmental psychopathology, as presented by these scholars and, as Cicchetti (1984, p. 1) noted, built on the sturdy foundations laid by "the great systematizers in psychology" that preceded them (e.g., Erikson, 1950; Freud, 1937/1955; Freud, 1976; Goldstein, 1939; Rapaport, 1951; Werner, 1948), articulates some primary principles that set aside this extraordinary field from related, neighboring disciplines. First, developmental psychopathology emphasizes the dimensional interplay between "normal" and "abnormal," between "adaptation" and "maladaptation," and assumes and indeed demonstrates that the interface between "typical" and "atypical" development is informative. Second, developmental psychopathology highlights the existence of multiple, often overlapping pathways and processes, including the consequential concepts of equifinality (an outcome can be reached through several different developmental pathways) and multifinality (a single starting point can eventuate and lead to multiple, different outcomes). Third, developmental psychopathology focuses on lifespan development, with a lens that extends beyond investigating only children and adolescents. This lifespan developmental perspective is especially important with respect to the prior two points focused on the interplay between "normal" and "abnormal" and the existence of multiple, intersecting pathways over the lifespan. Fourth, and echoing the title of our inaugural editorial, developmental psychopathology underscores that both continuity and change co-exist in lifespan developmental pathways and processes that contribute to adaptation and maladaptation. Fifth, as a broad framework, developmental psychopathology represents a truly intentional multidisciplinary field that explicitly draws on and encourages integration across multiple allied disciplines and subspecialties, including many subdisciplines in psychology (e.g., clinical, developmental), psychiatry, pediatrics, neuroscience (e.g., affective, cognitive, behavioral with either/both humans and animals), and other social science research. Last, developmental psychopathology prioritizes the importance of multiple levels of analysis for understanding both normal and abnormal development over the lifespan.

We explicitly note these salient aspects of developmental psychopathology as a field because the pages of *Development and Psychopathology* provide an optimal space for scholars to communicate their best work relevant for developmental psychopathology in this unique journal. Indeed, *Development and Psychopathology* represents, and we intend for it to remain, the premier journal for the best of developmental psychopathology research to be shared. The mission of the journal, thus, continues with the primary focus of publishing the highest quality and most impactful scholarship that are guided by the core principles and themes of developmental psychopathology. Having been fortunate to publish multiple papers in and having served on the Editorial Board under its founding Editor-in-Chief, Dr Cicchetti, we both understand, value, and appreciate what is special, significant, and vital about *Development and Psychopathology*. With our vantage as developmental psychopathology scholars and having the privilege to serve as co-editors-in-chief of this important journal, we share below our editorial vision for *Development and Psychopathology*, including statements of continuity in priorities for the journal as well as notes of change as we seek to maintain and grow the excellence of the journal for the field.

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it"

The maxim aptly describes *Development and Psychopathology*'s current status. We are grateful and cognizant of the fact that we are standing on the shoulders of an academic giant. Dr Cicchetti founded this journal in 1989 with its inaugural issue, served as the editor continuously until 2025, and built the strong foundations in which *Development and Psychopathology* is a high-impact, leading journal overall in the social sciences as well as the premier outlet for developmental psychopathology-centered scholarship. Scholars

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know this and send their best work to *Development and Psychopathology*.

As such, we intend to keep many aspects of what Dr Cicchetti created that make *Development and Psychopathology* a journal of excellence. As one example, we are retaining something relatively unique for publishing scientific work: the space for longer papers beyond the usual short word length at many medical-oriented (3000–5000 words) or psychology-oriented (35 pages/9000 words) journals. Keeping in mind the developmental psychopathology principles as enumerated above, historically the best *Development and Psychopathology* papers have been theoretically rich and conceptually well-grounded, and, as such, authors need sufficiently appropriate space to articulate clearly developmental psychopathology theory and relevant evidence. Moreover, *Development and Psychopathology* papers often contain advanced statistics, rigorous longitudinal approaches, and overall high methodological sophistication with multiple methods and informants, so authors need sufficient space to communicate these adequately and clearly as well. Finally, stellar papers in *Development and Psychopathology* have discussions that go significantly beyond the typical discussion section that often simply recapitulates study results and places findings in the context of already reviewed existing literature, all without truly advancing a deeper conceptual and empirical understanding of the topic that could be accomplished with suggested next steps and proposed alternatives that could be investigated in future work.

Another feature of *Development and Psychopathology* that we will maintain includes the emphasis on *Special Issues*. Over the roughly 35 years of the journal, *Development and Psychopathology* has tended to publish at least one special issue per year, and so many of these special issues over the years have shaped the field and produced new scholarship and knowledge as a result of the coherent focus of leading scholars contributing to a focal special issue. We will continue special issues, and indeed, already several are in the works with topics identified and special issue co-editors who are currently executing and organizing this work. To name a few, future special issues will include: (1) a series on resilience (Burack, Masten, & Roisman, in preparation), (2) expanding ecological risks to focus on pollutants, the exposome, and climate stress (Miller, Lowe, Hankin, & Roisman, in preparation), (3) hormonal and reproductive changes with implications for risk across the lifespan (Mendle, Kiesner, Eisenlohr-Moul, & Hankin, in preparation), (4) developmental aspects of personality pathology over the lifespan (Sharp, DeClercq, & Hankin, in preparation), and (5) an extended series on advances in statistical and methodological approaches to the study of the development of psychopathology (Berry, Hamaker, Roisman, & Hankin, in preparation).

"Change is the wind that moves us toward new horizons."

Continuity and change co-exist. Here we briefly highlight areas of change to the journal with the aim to build upon the excellence and quality already instantiated at *Development and Psychopathology*.

We are accelerating the time for completing editorial review

Historically, the quality of reviews at *Development and Psychopathology* has been excellent. As with many other psychological and social science journals over the last several decades, however, a source of complaint is the long lag time for reviews to be completed and an editorial decision rendered. As co-EICs, we are completing desk reviews efficiently, often within one or two days after the journal's editorial assistant has finalized all necessary journal submission checks. For the approximately 60% of submissions that pass initial desk review, the submission is assigned to an action editor (Hankin, Roisman, or Gee), who then finds reviewers who are requested to complete their review within 3–4 weeks. Reviewers are encouraged to focus on the bigger issues most important for informing editorial decisions. We have implemented these updates and accelerated the overall time frame for editorial decisions and quicker publication of work while seeking to further improve overall journal impact.

We have added a new journal submission format

which we call *Views*. This novel submission allows expert authors the space to articulate, in a relatively brief and succinct submission, their views and perspectives, including for possibly unorthodox, field-pushing standpoints and opinions. Ideally, *Views* pieces will provide readers with a coherent perspective in the field, often one that may be on the vanguard, such that these commentaries might inspire others to conduct empirical research that evaluates and tests these new ideas. Instructions for submissions of this format are located on the journal's website under Author Instructions. These shorter perspective pieces receive the same, high-standard, rigorous review and editorial process as all articles in the journal, albeit with a slightly different emphasis and set of instructions for reviewers given that *Views* submissions may not contain empirical data as expected with the traditional Regular Article submission. We have already implemented the *Views* submission format, which is available via the journal's on-line submission portal. Indeed, to date, a handful of *Views* papers have been published (e.g., Syed & Frankenhuis, 2025, on improving research in developmental psychopathology using registered reports; Mendle, 2026, on interpersonal motivations in adolescent rumination; and Stallworthy et al., 2025, on considering the value and significance of developmental frameworks).

We have added registered reports as a submission format

As co-EICs, we strongly value research findings that are reproducible, robust, replicable, and of known generalizability. There are many ways that editors at journals and the publishing companies can facilitate robust scientific knowledge, and we expand more on this broader point next. One concrete step that many journals have taken includes *registered reports*, with a standard Stage 1 submission (here called registered protocols) for empirical research that includes the study conceptualization in an Introduction along with detailed methods and proposed data analysis, which then receives peer review. In this manner, decisions about publication are based entirely on the strength of the work's conceptualization and methodology, not on the set of results. As such, we seek to incentivize authors to submit their best, most conceptually important and significant ideas along with an *a priori* specified design and analytic plan that together can provide strong, robust methods for evaluating these high-impact conceptualizations to the journal. These will be reviewed based on the merits of the work, such that so-called null results can be published that evaluate significant, important developmental psychopathological questions and hypotheses. Pending acceptance of the registered report Protocol (which will be published in the journal), authors then have an in-principle accepted paper which is submitted as a completed, Stage 2 manuscript inclusive of everything. As with *Views* as a new submission option, registered reports are also

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available as a new submission choice with steps enumerated in the Author Instructions section of the journal's webpage.

We are incentivizing the publication of scholarship that is reproducible, robust, replicable, and of known generalizability

Many areas of science, including the psychological and social sciences, have experienced a crisis of sorts (i.e., the so-called "replication crisis") and been criticized for apparent lack of replicability that, together, can make for an incomplete body of knowledge that is not fully accumulating toward potential truth. Many of these issues, including proposed potential remedies, are well-known, especially as numerous journals across many scholarly disciplines in the past twenty years have implemented changes to improve scientific research's credibility and generalizability based on a more reproducible, robust, and replicable set of findings. We as co-EICs have joined *Development and Psychopathology* to hundreds of scientific journals to concretely instantiate this focus by using the TOP (Transparency and Openness Promotion) Level 2 Guideline's modular standards. The explicit steps that authors need to take when submitting original empirical research are included on the journal's webpage in Author Instructions, and these new TOP Level 2 standards include standardized reporting of key information (e.g., Data Citation, Data, Research Materials, Transparency, Research Design, Analysis Plan, APA Style"s Reporting Standards) required for robust, reproducible, and potentially replicable results that can lead toward a more credible, cumulative research literature. Building on TOP Level 2 standards, each empirical Research Article must explicitly report key study features (i.e., in the Abstract as well as other places in the manuscript) to include participant demographics, sample sizes, and effect sizes (if appropriate given study design). Finally, and in addition to requiring these specific features for each empirical paper submission and implementing TOP Level 2 standards, the journal strongly emphasizes transparent, open-science practices and processes, such as study pre-registration, publicly posting data analysis code, and providing data and materials whenever possible. In addition, we strongly encourage the submission of Registered Replication Reports leveraging the new registered report format described above. Overall, our hope by instantiating these changes in reporting practices and documenting that authors have followed these improved journal requirements when submitting a paper is to enhance the confidence that readers have regarding published findings in the journal.

We are prioritizing empirical studies and reviews

The lion's share of published papers at *Development and Psychopathology* over the years include empirical research in the form of *Regular Article* submissions, and we expect that trend to continue. At the same time, authors are encouraged to write and submit reviews of the literature, as such review papers can contribute high impact to the field by summarizing and synthesizing a particular corpus of research. Nevertheless, as co-EICs, we wish to clarify the journal's preference overall regarding submissions that emphasize empirical work. Reviews that are systematic (e.g., following *PRISMA* and other systematic review guidelines) and ideally those with at least some quantitative (e.g., meta-analytic, individual participant data) summarization of findings in the literature reviewed will be better received. We will consider conceptual reviews and theory papers (and these, perhaps, may best be written as a *Views* piece, pending size and scope of the contribution), although the bar will be high for such purely conceptual/theoretical submissions when they do not include relevant empirical information.

We are highlighting lifespan research

A core developmental psychopathology core principle includes investigating developmental pathways and processes over the entire lifespan with implications for understanding adaptation and maladaptation. Traditionally, many *Development and Psychopathology* papers have tended to focus on samples with study participants with ages representing predominantly the first two decades of life (prenatal period through adolescence). Building on developmental psychopathology principles and valuing developmental processes and pathways across the lifespan and across generations, we explicitly encourage research submissions from scholars who are conducting work across the lifespan, including adulthood and later in life.

We have expanded the Editorial Board in scope to include more diverse, early career, and international scholars

A key priority for us as co-EICs includes continuing to build the field of developmental psychopathology. One essential goal toward that larger mission is to ensure both that the scholarship as well as the scholars, conducting and evaluating the work, optimally represent diversity and inclusion. Toward this important end, we have considerably increased the overall number of scholars on the journal's Editorial Board (now over 200), and we have amplified representation of scholars from numerous settings, including early career researchers and those from diverse backgrounds and countries. It is our expectation that the journal will continue to receive submissions from diverse scholars around the world studying important, significant issues centering developmental psychopathology questions. And we hope that by diversifying the experts and expertise on the Editorial Board, there will be a virtuous cycle toward more diverse questions, contexts, populations and samples, methods, and approaches that are matched with the diverse set of content experts who can provide rigorous review and feedback to promote the best developmental psychopathology scholarship.

Last, while commenting about editorial review processes and the constitution of the Board, we want to make explicit *Development and Psychopathology*'s process for conflicts of interest when it comes to Co-EICs, action editors, or Editorial Board members submitting their research to the journal. For all submissions, our aim is for the editorial review process to be transparent, fair, and free of conflicts of interest. We hold ourselves as co-EICs to the same standard of rigorous, robust, fair review of manuscripts whenever we, or colleagues or trainees connected with us as co-EICs, submit to *Development and Psychopathology*. We are fortunate and delighted that Dr Dylan Gee is contributing her talents and abilities as Associate Editor of the journal. In addition to serving as Associate Editor for submissions that match her deep and varied areas of expertise, she will also manage any submissions that are or could be perceived as containing conflicts of interest (e.g., when either co-EIC submits a paper to the journal or when a colleague/trainee connected with a co-EIC submits a paper). To prove the point, already both of us have experienced a rejection of at least one of our papers submitted to the journal in the past year.

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Conclusion

In summary, we wish to express our gratitude for the opportunity to pick up the baton from Dr Cicchetti as *Development and Psychopathology*'s founding (and now Emeritus) Editor-in-Chief and our fervent desire to keep the journal running at a high level of excellence long into the future. We have confidence in the health of the journal given the strong foundation he built over the years, and we hope we can continue to grow the journal and its preeminence as an outlet for the best developmental psychopathology-focused scholarship. We hope we have communicated how important this journal is to the field, as well as to us, personally, as developmental psychopathologists. We pledge to do all we can to continue the journal's excellence as a source for deep, rich, theoretically-based, forward-thinking scholarship that exhibits methodologically rigorous designs, methods, analyses, and approaches. With some additional changes, including new submission formats alongside enhanced commitments to ensuring the published research is robust and reproducible while transparent and open, we hope this journal continues to promote the highest quality and most impactful developmental psychopathology contributions.

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